



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
JUNEAU – JOHN RISHEL MINERAL
INFORMATION CENTER
100 Savikko Road
Mayflower Island
Douglas, Alaska 99824
907-364-1554; Fax 364-1574

October 1, 2003

3031 (942)

Dear Stakeholder

In 1996, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) assumed the U.S. Bureau of Mines' (USBM) responsibility for conducting assessments of mineral resources on public land in Alaska. The mineral assessment program is authorized by Section 1010 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), with funding allocated annually. Mineral assessments are conducted by the Solid Minerals Branch of the Energy and Solid Minerals Division.

The primary thrust of BLM's mineral assessment program is to conduct studies of regional mining districts as defined by Ransome & Kerns (1954). The objectives of mining district studies are to determine the type, amount, and distribution of mineral deposits, and make resource estimates and development potential determinations when applicable. These studies consist of locating, sampling, surveying, and mapping historic mines, prospects, and occurrences, as well as following up on newly discovered mineralization. Each district assessment takes approximately three to five years, with two teams conducting concurrent assessments. Interim data file reports are published during the assessment, and upon completion, a final assessment report is published. The BLM also performs preliminary economic evaluations of mining districts, the results of which are released as economic pre-feasibility study reports. In addition, the BLM has historically provided funding for airborne geophysical surveys to aid in district assessments. Some recent assessments have included the investigation of industrial minerals (rock) and coal resources. For current and future assessments, the BLM plans to release separate reports on the assessment of industrial minerals and coal when warranted.

In May 2000, the BLM released its long-range plan for mineral assessments of public lands in Alaska. Prior to that (April 1999), the BLM distributed a draft of the plan to regional native corporations, Federal and State land managers, and other interested parties with the intent of obtaining input from various customers. The final plan, incorporating the limited number of comments received, included a ranking of mining districts for future assessment.

The BLM has determined that the long-range plan should be revised. Since the release of the first long-range plan, there have been significant changes in land status, due primarily to conveyance, and the BLM has initiated a program to develop regional land management plans for Alaska. Although the percent of Federal and other public lands in each district, and the amount of those lands open to resource development remain important factors to consider, other factors may also impact the schedule of future assessments. These include stable funding, potential special projects, and staffing levels. There have also been important recent developments within the industry, increased understanding of the geology of Alaska (which has resulted in new and significant discoveries), and changes to State and Federal regulations and

permitting requirements. The revised long-range plan will focus on updating the prioritization of mining districts scheduled for future assessment. Once again, the final revision will be issued only after giving our stakeholders an opportunity for input.

We would appreciate any comments you have on the existing plan and/or any recommendations on the prioritization of areas for future study. The plan text is available on the Internet at <http://www.ak.blm.gov/affairs/press/LRPfnl2.pdf>, and a hard copy can be mailed on request. Under the current plan, the next 25 mining districts (of the remaining 56) scheduled for assessment are listed by priority in Attachment 1. Attachment 2 is a questionnaire that can be used to provide comments. We also welcome additional comments you may have. The questionnaire and any other comments need to be in our hands by April 30, 2004 to ensure they can be considered during development of the new plan. Forward the completed questionnaire and/or any written comments to:

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100 Savikko Road, Mayflower Island
Douglas, AK 99824

An electronic version of the plan can be e-mailed on request. Comments may also be entered at the web site. If you have questions about our process or the plan, please contact Don Baggs (907-271-2454; Donald_Baggs@ak.blm.gov), Chris DeWitt (907-364-1554; Chris_DeWitt@ak.blm.gov) or Earle Williams (907-271-5762; Earle_Williams@ak.blm.gov).

Sincerely,

Colleen McCarthy
Deputy State Director
Division of Energy and Solid Minerals

Attachments:

1. Mining District Priority List
2. Questionnaire

Prioritized Mining Districts Remaining to be Assessed

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Bristol Bay | 14. McGrath* |
| 2. Admiralty | 15. Melozitna |
| 3. Fairhaven | 16. Nelchina |
| 4. Bonnifield | 17. Nizina |
| 5. Willow Creek | 18. Port Clarence |
| 6. Innoko* | 19. Shungnak |
| 7. Chistochina | 20. Nome |
| 8. Council | 21. Yenta |
| 9. Kougarok | 22. Hot Springs |
| 10. Koyuk | 23. Tolovana |
| 11. Hughes | 24. Circle |
| 12. Iditarod* | 25. Fairbanks |
| 13. Marshall* | |

*Parts of this district currently being assessed under the expanded Aniak Mining District Assessment.

Current or Completed Mining Districts

1. Aniak (Includes parts of Anvik, Iditarod, Innoko, Marshall, and McGrath)
2. Chichagof
3. Colville
4. Delta River
5. Fortymile
6. Goodnews Bay
7. Hope
8. Juneau
9. Kantishna
10. Ketchikan (includes Hyder)
11. Koyukuk
12. Prince William Sound
13. Stikine Area (Petersburg and Kupreanof)
14. Valdez Creek

BLM's Long-Range Mineral Assessment Plan Questionnaire

1. Do you agree with the current mining district priority list? If not, provide your top four or five. Include a brief reason for any recommended changes to the current list. (Your list may include those districts not shown in the top 25 list.)
2. For past assessments, the BLM considered factors that included as land status, percent public land, and historic mining activity. What do you feel are the most important factors to consider when prioritizing mining districts for assessment?
3. Do you feel any of the completed mining district assessments were inadequate? If so, which ones and why?
4. Are you satisfied with the BLM's mineral assessment program? If not, what changes would you recommend?

Please attach additional sheets if needed

Attachment 2